

JUNE 4, 2023

“Our Amazing Triune God”

**Matthew 3:16–17**

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

**Matthew 28:19**

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

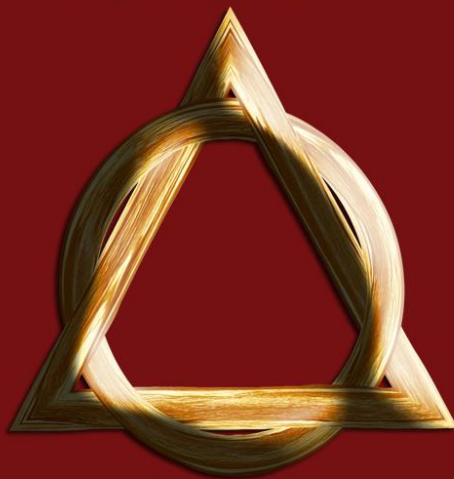
Special Music: Doxology (God Be Praised) Todd Fields \ Worship Circle Hymns

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLPZAKUTle4>

# Our Amazing Triune God

*Father*

*Son*



*Spirit*

## **THE GALLERY**

Sometimes I wish  
To see through the eyes  
Of Dali, Escher, or iCart,  
Mixed with the colors  
Of Van Gogh  
And Picasso  
Add lines of Miro  
In a tableau  
That escape the boundaries  
Of perception.

What a joy it must be  
To escape the confines  
Of predestined minds  
And peek around  
The corners of reality  
And by doing so  
Glimpse the world  
Through the eyes of God

Three in one  
And one in Three  
Lost in a hidden reality  
As we stretch our minds  
Like loose canvas  
Tight to the corners

Trying to decipher  
The essence of God  
In a gallery  
Being painted as Trinity.

My mind contorts  
In an effort to see  
What lies beyond the curtain.  
How can it be?  
Three in one  
One in three?  
And just when I think I see  
The canvas spins around  
And the image is upside down.

So let me rest  
Upon this marble bench  
And contemplate  
The versatility  
Of our God  
Who is one in three.  
Each part of the completed Masterpiece  
Merged into perfection  
Granting me modest insight  
Into the essence of who God might be

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
An image so loud I can hear it

**Separate when viewed one way  
Joined when viewed from another  
United and merged into one  
Bringing each of us  
Into his fold  
Through her multi-dimensional purpose.  
As we seek to step  
From a two-dimensional plane  
Into the reality  
Of the depth of our Creator.**

I know. I know. Perhaps a little over the top. But ponder this thought. Our perception of the world around us is much different than when we were four years old. “I remember that counter being so much taller.” “Where’s the rabbit ears and tin foil on the black and white television?” “Where’s the Brylcreem that my mother made me use every time I left the house?” Things change. And with it, our perception of the world around us. We often adapt. And sometimes, when we don’t adapt, we get squashed like a bug. Being able to adapt is an important tool for us in this ever-changing world.

There have always been among us those who see the world just a little differently, even when they become older. It is as if they can peek around the corners of reality and see Creation from a different angle. Writers, philosophers, painters, theologians, musicians, artists, and poets. Picture Michelangelo standing before a block of marble and being able to remove everything that is not “David.” How does one do that? How can humans write and speak words that seem to transcend human nature? Saying things, making things, dreaming things that leave us in awe. It’s as if those individuals have an extra insight into both Creation and Creator.

But not all of us have an appreciation for the individuals with that insight. Recently, a Florida charter school board fired a principal for allowing a sixth-grade art class to see an image of Michelangelo’s “David” because some parents declared it to be pornography because “David” is nude. While most of the world laughed at the stupid, backwards, ignorant Americans, the mayor of Florence Italy invited the students and their parents to come see the actual statue and admire

its beauty. He also invited the fired principal so he could honor her for being able to appreciate what others could not.

We see from this story that there are those who do not wish to be able to see around the corner and face a different perspective on Creation. Some people worry about what they will find if they do that, good or bad. But most would rather stick to being members of the Flat Earth Society. The world is flat and I am sticking with that answer. I am comfortable with that answer. You cannot and will not change my mind. They stand on shaking ground as the world trembles and shakes beneath them.

But in a universe filled with wonder and beauty, why do we let fear and confusion prevent us from taking a peek behind the curtain if we are offered that opportunity? Why do we submit ourselves to the boundaries of a flat earth when God has given us a magnificent universe of Joy and wonder? Are we afraid we are going to fall off the edge? Do we have so very little faith in our Heavenly Father that we think he is trying to keep something from us? He's not. He gives us a way to take that look around that corner. Joel 2:28 says:

**28 “And it shall come to pass afterward,  
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;  
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
your old men shall dream dreams,  
and your young men shall see visions.**

**He begs us to look around the corner and use the curious minds he gave us to not only look around the corner but to examine who he is and the wonder of creation he has brought us.**

**However, when we run into people who claim to be able to do this, we think they are crazy. We have a tendency to believe that people are just a bit touched in the head when we can't understand what they are trying to tell us. After all, we know that we are stable and correct, standing firm on our shaking earth. We have no reason to mess that up, even if it is proven that we are wrong.**

**Okay, preacher, you've told us that some crazy people may not actually be crazy. You've talked about art, music, words, and something about looking around a corner somewhere. What does all of this have to do with the Trinity.**

**Well, let me start out by telling you that you will not find the word trinity in the Bible. That is because the concept of the Trinity is an evolving theology. I am not going to give you a lengthy history lesson into the origins of Trinitarian Theology. Can I get a sigh of relief? I will admit that better minds than mine have wrestled with the concept of the trinity and come up with more questions than answers. I will also tell you that the debate on how to view Trinitarian Theology didn't even begin to be rounded out until after the third century and it would more than a 1000 years after that time before it became such an important part of our theology today.**

**We find the work of the Trinity all throughout the Bible, Old testament and New. Our Triune God weaves His presence throughout our history, using his**

people to move his kingdom forward. The one totally unique attribute that separates the Triune Creator from Creation is that he/they are “uncreated.” While technically the term “uncreated” is correct, I’m not so fond of it because in today’s context it could mean that the Creator was created and then uncreated. The actual understanding by most theologians is that the Creator was never created (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit). They always existed as one creator with an abounding love for their greatest creation, “Mankind.”

St. Patrick of Ireland made it all much simpler. The emblem of his ministry was the Shamrock. The three-leaf clover was a very effective tool for sharing the gospel to the pagan Irish during the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Three leaves, one stem. Three leaves, one plant.

For millennia, scholars and theologians have tried to break down the leaves and give them meaning. “God the Father does this, God the son does that, God the Holy Spirit provides this.” The absolute truth is unless we can accept a path that allows us to look around the corner and see the different perspectives, we are doomed to live our lives with a 2-dimensional representation of God instead of the all encompassing 3-dimensional presence of Creator, Savior, and Caregiver. We cannot just put aspects of God into various drawers and pull them out when we need them. That just isn’t the way it works. And to even try is hubris of the highest order. God is not subject to OUR definitions. God does not exist because we say that he exists. God is not God simply because we want Him to be God.

But it is what we have heard for many years.



- 1. God the Father is the Creator**
- 2. God the son is the Savior**
- 3. God the Holy Spirit is our Compass**

**That is flat earth theology and we are capable of so much more than that.**

**Especially when we begin to understand the intricacies that God is all three in one. They are all joined at the stem.**

- 1. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the Creator.**
- 2. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the Savior.**
- 3. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are our compass.**

**When God created the universe, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were all there. When Jesus suffered on the cross, He did not suffer alone. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit were right there with Him. When the flames of the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples in Jerusalem, God the Father and God the Son were there as well.**

**They are joined in a spiritual bond that makes them inseparable. Men and women have tried to place emphasis on one leaf over the other and it never holds its form. We can't say, "Well, I believe in God but I don't believe in Jesus" or "I believe in Jesus but not the Holy Spirit." They cannot be divided.**

**And yes, sometimes it takes someone a little different than the rest of us to show us that perspective, to make it possible for us to see through their eyes as they peek around the corner to gain new perspective and insight into the nature of our Triune God. And it appears odd to us, because we struggle to understand the perspective. It is not in our standard form of reference. It is like going to a museum gallery and finding a painting to look at. One that confuses us. We know that the artist is trying to tell us something important, but it all seems in disarray. And yet, if we sit and contemplate that painting, we will start to have things that begin to reach out to us, to form a deeper image. Maybe the lines in a Miro, or the colors in a Van Gough, the shifts in perspective found in a Picasso, or the impossible images of Escher. We may not comprehend the painting as a whole, but we can gain something from leaning into its message and giving it thought.**

**God loves us. He loves each of you. We may believe that Jesus died for us, but I tell you that it was God that died for us on that cross, not just Jesus. That spiritual bond that was torn asunder in that last second as Jesus took on the sins of all mankind were felt by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit as well. And after three unimaginable days, God came together again, humankind cleansed and a pathway made for each of to the throne of the Almighty.**

**We are the children of a Triune God bought with a great price. A price that can never be repaid but is freely offered by our Creator. He takes our wounds and heals them, binds our souls and heals them. He brings us into His presence**

with joy and wonder to share in His Kingdom. It is through his blood that our debt is paid.

The story of Jesus' baptism told my Matthew is the first time that we glimpse a view of the depth of the trinity:

**And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."**

We see all three dimensions of our Creator (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) as we see them join in a single purpose, the beginning of their earthly ministry.

This week, I challenge you. Take time to look up Picasso, Miro, MC Escher, or Dali. Take time to really look at it. Search for meaning in it. See if you can find some meaning that the artist was trying to convey to you. Then, pick up your Bible and read the 38<sup>th</sup> chapter of Job and see if you can use that same intensity to look around the corner and take a peek at the magnificence of our Creator. Pray that he shows you more than just the lines, swirls, and colors and allows you to see beyond words on the page. You just might enjoy the wonder of diving into God's word with a new-found hunger.

God bless you all,

**AMEN**

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